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ABSTRACT

This discussion document from a symposium on shut out youth attempts to heighten awareness of the housing problems experienced by youth in Ireland. It is based on information obtained from a questionnaire sent to voluntary organizations working in local areas. It focuses on homelessness and its related issues of health, education, and the environment. The ten chapters are the following: (1) Introduction; (2) Who Are the Homeless? (3) Pointers to the Basic Needs of Homeless People; (4) Immediate Legislative and Administrative Reforms; (5) Young People and Homelessness; (6) A New Approach to Housing; (7) The European Dimension; (8) The UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless; (9) Review of Young Fine Gael's Questionnaire; (10) Summary of Young Fine Gael's Recommendations. Three appendices include the survey instrument, response to a housing bill, and a summary of a basic income scheme. A bibliography is provided. (VM)

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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"SYMPOSIUM ON "SHUT OUT YOUTH"

25-30 October 1987

EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE

"Moving away from Homelessness"

A discussion document by Young Fine Gael (Ireland)

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Young Fine Gael has worked on the issue of homelessness over the past number of years. This document is a continuation of our work such as the Housing Campaign of 1983/84, a housing survey carried out by the Mid Mid-Monaghan Branch of Young Fine Gael and a submission to the Government in 1986 in response to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1985.

1.2. The issue of Homelessness does not exist in isolation, but relates very closely to the environmental, health, education and welfare policy areas. We therefore make no apology when our ideas move beyond the conventional idea of homelessness. We hope to stimulate discussion, research and action.

1.3 We obtained information by sending a questionnaire (see appendix 1) to voluntary organisations working in this area, Health Boards and Local Authorities. We also used the discussion papers from the Focus Point Seminar on the Homeless (January 1987) and other publications (see bibliography).

1.4 If homelessness is to be tackled effectively, political will is needed. We hope that this document will heighten awareness of homelessness among legislators and stimulate legislative action.

1.5 We would like to record our sincere thanks to all who replied to our questionnaire, supplied us with information or helped us in any other way.

Chapter 2

WHO ARE THE HOMELESS ?

2.1 The popular image of the homeless is very limited - frequently it extends only as far as the man on the park bench. Most people fail to recognise whole categories of homeless people.

2.2 The recession has heightened the possibility of homelessness. Clearly, the possibility of unemployment and/or an inability to meet mortgage repayments may render a person homeless. Poorer economic circumstances can lead to greater stress within the family unity. Our research has shown that family disputes are a major cause of people leaving home.

2.3 Any comprehensive definition of the homeless must include the following categories :

a) The 'traditional' homeless - the vagrant, the 'down and out' etc.
b) Women and children suffering from violence within the family home
c) People leaving home as a result of family disputes - husbands, wives, children or relatives
d) Evicted tenants
e) People leaving home as a result of their inability to meet financial commitments
f) People homeless as the result of a natural disaster or an emergency situation
g) Travellers
h) Refugees
i) People who live in or have left institutions such as childrens' homes, prisons, psychiatric institutions etc.
j) People living in hostels/shelter accommodation
k) Those who leave home to emigrate or migrate in search of employment.
l) People living without security of tenure

2.4 The needs of these groups vary and the state must develop co-ordinated policies and legislation to cater for all their needs. Consequently the legal definition of homelessness must be broadened (see chapter 4).

Chapter 3

POINTERS TO THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS

Homeless people do NOT need :

- A Vagrancy Act such as the 1824 Act which, under S4, makes it an offence to be homeless without any visible means of support
- To be patronised or ostracised
- To be ghetto-ised: homeless people should not be housed in substandard accommodation which other people have left
- Bureaucracy - Social Services officials must be trained to understand and deal with an individual's problems and difficulties
- Unemployment/demeaning or meaningless work - homeless people have a right to seek work on an equal footing with a housed person

Homeless people DO need:

- Advice - readily available and easily accessible
- Professional help - social workers, lawyers etc
- Health care - serious consideration should be given to providing mobile medical care facilities to homeless people, particularly those who are totally alienated from the Institutions of the State
- Employment
- Stop-gap short term finance eg. for a deposit on private rented accommodation
- Crisis shelters which could be used in cases of emergency for a limited period of time
- Comprehensive legislation which would update the existing archaic laws
- Understanding of their problems coupled with an acceptance of their dignity by members of the general public

Chapter 4

IMMEDIATE ACTION: LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

We wish to see the following provisions included in a comprehensive Bill dealing with the homeless :

4.1 A duty to provide accommodation should be placed on the relevant Housing Authority. For years there has been considerable confusion about this matter and the Housing Authorities and Health Boards have disowned responsibility to varying extents. This duty must also include the establishment of a co-ordinating structure between the Housing Authority and the Health Boards. Voluntary groups working in this area should have a seat on Health Boards.

4.2 The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1985 defines a homeless person as someone who: "has no accommodation which in the opinion of the authority he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can occupy or remain in occupation of "

or

"is living in a hospital, country home, night shelter or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the type referred to (above)"

We believe these definitions are too restrictive. We wish to see the definition extended to include those living in hostels. It has been suggested that confusion could arise over the interpretation of the word "hostel". Simon has suggested the following definition which we support fully:

"The term 'hostel' referred to shall be interpreted as multiple occupancy accommodation constructed for the purpose of providing refuge and facilities or services for a person who would not otherwise have accommodation readily available for him to occupy but shall not include hostel accommodation for students, professional trainees or youth hostels".

We also believe that the term "can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of" should be interpreted to include insecurity of tenure.

4.3 **Intentionality:** The 1985 Bill included a controversial intentionality clause in its definition of homeless. This could lead to a situation where somebody could be deemed to have deliberately done something, at some time in the past, which worsened his/her housing situation and consequently would not be considered for housing. Practical experience in the U.K with similar legislation has shown that such a clause gives great discretion to the housing officer. In many cases this has lead to hardship, litigation and confusion.

Our previous submission (see appendix 1) to the 1985 Bill demanded that guidelines be issued within which the Authority would have to judge on intentionality. These were that the following conditions could not be used as grounds for considering a person intentionally Homeless :

a) pregnancy
b) being single
c) being able-bodied
d) age
e) the breach of a rental agreement

On further research we believe that the best way of dealing with the problems inherent in an intentionality clause is, quite simply, not to include it in the first place.

4.4 **Appeals:** We believe that the right to appeal a decision of the relevant Housing Authority should exist. In our original submission we proposed that the right of appeal be brought to the District Court. Further research has shown that some organisations favour a tribunal system.

The District Court is an established legal structure but its accommodation facilities are very poor and costs and formality may be off-putting.

A tribunal system provides informality and specialisation but requires the setting up of a new administrative structure.

4.5 The new Act should ensure that great care is taken when an applicant for housing is being told of the Authority's decision. The decision should be given both verbally and in writing so the applicant is fully aware of the decision.

4.6 Facilities should be included in the Bill for the employment of a social worker to give a detailed and professional report on the individual circumstances of the applicant.

4.7 We request the Government to review Section 54 of the Health Act 1953 which places responsibility on Health Boards to provide "shelter and maintenance".

S. 54 of the 1953 Health Act provides that:
"It shall be the duty of a Health Board to give every person ..... who is eligible .....such institutional assistance as appears to them necessary or proper in each particular case"

The relationship between the statutory duties of the Health Board and the responsibility of the Housing Authorities must be clarified. If this relationship is not clarified by reviewing Section 54 of the 1953 Act, continuing confusion is inevitable.

4.8 **Emergency Accommodation:** Provisions should be made for those in need of immediate accommodation due to an emergency situation such as leaving a place of accommodation due to violence, natural disaster, unsuitability of accommodation or eviction. In such circumstances, accommodation should be provided regardless of age, sex or marital status. The accommodation should obviously be of good standard.

When accommodation is so provided, it should not be provided for longer than one month without a decision of the Housing Authority being made on whether the party(ies) concerned is Homeless.

4.9 We recommend that the Government look closely at the Report of the Commission on Social Welfare as it relates to housing benefit. We believe that the existing support provision are inequitable. These are :

Supplementary Welfare
Decontrolled Rent Allowance
Differential Rent Scheme
Subsidies to owner occupiers

These are inequitable because:

a) They may provide benefit to those least in need
b) They may be unfair in their operations e.g. inconsistencies in the differential rent scheme mean that large families pay a higher proportion of their income on housing than small families.

We believe that a uniform housing benefit scheme as proposed by the Commission on Social Welfare has merit and should be investigated now. Such a scheme, along with a basic income as proposed by Young Fine Gael, would provide a far more equitable system (see Appendix 3).

4.10 **Minimum Standards:** The private rented sector is an area that is normally forgotten about in housing policies. In line with our view that everyone is entitled to a decent standard of housing, we feel that this area should be properly regulated. We recommend that there should be a national minimum standard governing areas such as sanitation, living space per person and safety regulations.

4.11 **Halting Sites:** We believe that it should be the duty of the Housing Authority to determine the needs of the travellers in their area and to provide, manage and control, with the views of the travellers concerned, serviced halting sites for caravans and tents. National standards for serviced sites should be established and charges arranged accordingly.

4.12 **Relations between voluntary organisations and statutory bodies:** our questionnaire has indicated that there is great scope for an improvement in the relations and consultations between voluntary organisations and statutory bodies working in this area:

a) Voluntary organisations should be consulted before policy is established at all levels
b) If it is more cost effective for a voluntary organisation to provide a service, the relevant statutory body should provide the back-up finance and support
c) While consultation should be regular and formal, bureaucracy must not be allowed to take over
d) If voluntary organisations can provide employment, the social welfare system should be adapted to allow for flexible work patterns : we believe Young Fine Gael's basic income proposal comes into its own in this area.

4.13 While we are very aware of the financial constraints on the nation, we believe that if measures are not taken to tackle the problems of homelessness in the future, the financial consequences in the 1990's will be far greater.

Chapter 5

YOUNG PEOPLE AND HOMELESSNESS

5.1 At present those most at risk from lack of services are women and young people. It is not enough to provide shelter as this does not deal with the cause of the problem. Professional services are essential to investigate the reason why someone became homeless and to discuss with them how they can improve their situation.

The fact that such services are needed is evident by the fact that Focus Point in Dublin receives requests from an average of 95 people a day.

5.2 The National Youth Policy Committee's Final Report stated that homelessness among young people is a serious problem. According to a report on a group of 200 young homeless people in the Dublin 8 area, most stay out for 3-4 nights at a time. About half use drugs of some kind. Clearly shelter is not enough : professional aftercare services are essential...

5.3 **Children in care:** The Statutory responsibility for maintenance does not apply to children in care who are not pursuing a course of education or training and are over 16. We believe that the gap in services should be filled by raising the age up to which Health Boards would have statutory responsibility to 18.

As stated before, if a voluntary organisation can provide a good service, the State should support such a group rather then allowing duplication.

5.4 The Final report of the National Youth Policy Committee recommended that services for transient homeless youth should be provided by the Youth Service. Unfortunately, however, the Local Youth Services Boards no longer receive Exchequer funding due to the provisions of this year's budget. This means that no state body is specifically responsible for homeless young people.

5.5 **Emigration:** The Irish Youth in London Research Report showed that, 10 weeks after arriving, 27% of Irish emigrants had slept rough.

The Youth Emigration Action Group Directory highlights the difficulty in finding accommodation in all cities.

Emigration, whether voluntary of involuntary, cannot be ignored and will not reduce substantially in the immediate future according to experts. Consequently, support and information must be made easily available both here and abroad. Government funding should be made available to facilitate information and advice services in secondary schools, third level colleges and information and job centres.

Chapter 6

A HOUSING POLICY FOR THE FUTURE

6.1 The current housing situation and that of the future demands that the government produce a well-researched, comprehensive and imaginative housing policy in the immediate future. While the numbers on the housing lists may be small at present, the demographic structure indicates that demand for housing will increase in the early 1990s.

6.2 A housing policy for the 1990s and beyond must break away from traditional concepts. A greater social mix must be achieved and the actual design of homes must be related to environmental factors and human needs such as :

- energy efficiency combined with non-pollutant fuels
- convenience of services, shops, schools and health care facilities
- traffic flow and public transport
- urban renewal and the renovation of old buildings
- landscaping to provide pleasant surroundings

Bearing these factors in mind, the current housing stock should also be closely examined with a view to improvement.

6.3 The area of housing finance must also be examined and new means explored. The voluntary housing sector should expand beyond providing homes for the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged. The development of co-operative housing should be investigated and encouraged. The provision of grants and subsidies must be reviewed to ensure that those most in need benefit.

6.4 We believe that the ever changing world of work in the late 1980s and 1990s will change the working patterns of many people - many people will work on a contractual basis rather than in permanent positions, for example. In such situations they may find it difficult to obtain a loan. We believe that it should be possible to devise a system which would allow the Public and/or the Private Sector to provide affordable,,secure housing. Such a form of co-operative housing would allow people to pay for their housing but would also provide an element of security for when they are not working.

6.5 **The Constitution:** we feel that Articles 43 and 45 of Bunreacht na hEireann (Private Property and Directive Principles on Social Policy) should be examined by a Government appointed commission to ensure that Art. 43 is not protecting property speculators to the detriment of the weaker sections of the community who are to be protected by the State under Art. 45. The Report of such a Commission should then be examined by an All Party Oireactas Committee.

Chapter 7

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION

7.1 In March 1987 the Report on Shelter for the Homeless in the European Community, drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, was published. The Report reviewed a number of motions tabled by M.E.P's on homelessness including motions from Ms. Mary Banotti, M.E.P, and Mr. Gene Fitzgerald, M.E.P. As a result of this report, a motion was put to the European Parliament in June 1987.

7.2 We broadly agree with the motion as passed but are concerned that some of the amendments to the original motion have weakened its effectiveness. Just some of the examples of this are the ways that the original motions 9 and 24 became the far less effective motions-as-passed 12 and 30:

7.2.1 Original Motion 9 "recommends, particularly, that disproportionate government subsidies providing tax relief for the better off buying their homes be redirected to cater for those in need of decent, affordable rented accommodation".

This was changed to: Motion-as-passed 12 which "considers that it would be sensible to give State support for the creation of incentives for private investment in housing construction, one aim of this being to overcome the possible lack of suitable accommodation for rent"

7.2.2 The link between homelessness and a basic income system was clearly spelt out in the Original Motion 24 which was considerably weakened when it became motion-as-passed 30:

Original Motion 24 "notes that certain categories of people such as young people, women and the long-term unemployed are not always covered by existing social security systems and asks the Commission and the Member States to carry out a study to see whether a Basic Income could make a contribution towards solving the problem of Homelessness"

Motion-as-passed 30 "notes that certain people, such as the most deprived young people, the long term unemployed with the least training, the most disadvantaged women are not always covered by existing social security systems and ask henceforth that no individual and no family should find themselves in the street and that the contributions paid by the tenants should be dependent on their means"

7.3 The Report also gives details of the situation of the homeless in Member States and reviews the problem. We welcome this as a first step in compiling information.

7.4 **EC Combat Poverty Programme 2 1985-1988:** under this programme, the Commission promotes and provides financial assistance for various types of action-research projects aimed at testing and improving new methods of helping the poor and those threatened by poverty in the Community. The Commission has selected four action-research projects for the benefit of the homeless and marginals. One of these projects is run by the Simon Community in Ireland in their projects in Dublin and Cork.

We agree with the European Parliament's proposal that an independent action programme for homeless people should be established in the Member States. Under the present EC Combat Poverty Programme 2, the homeless are grouped with marginals. This is unclear, imprecise and neither clarifies nor prioritises the homeless.

7.5 **European Co-ordination Group of Voluntary Organisations working with the homeless:** we would like to see the development of this group with a permanent office in Brussels to allow constant contact with the Commission, Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Such a group should receive encouragement and full co-operation from both Governments and the EC.

7.6 **Statutory Bodies:** the personnel in the statutory bodies who work with the homeless and in the area of housing should have formal contact with their colleagues in Europe to allow for the exchange of information, including statistics, programmes, legislation and evaluation of policies.

7.7 **The Commission and the Council of Ministers:** we are very disappointed by the lack of initiative on the part of the Council of Ministers and the Commission despite the work of the Parliament. The Commission must take note of,and act upon,the Parliament Motion of June 1987: we demand action NOW.

7.8 **The Council of Europe:** the Council of Europe is an invaluable forum for a great number of European States to discuss and debate this, and many other, issues. The Council must instigate action as well as initiating discussion.

Chapter 8

THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

8.1 In December 1982 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, by consensus, proclaiming 1987 the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Among the aims of IYSH are :

-to focus world attention on the plight of all those who live without a roof, in poor conditions and have no security.

-to highlight the political, economic, social, organisational and technical aspects to this problem.

-to sound an advance warning to the international community of the looming crisis of unprecedented dimensions facing the cities of the developing world.

8.2 The documentation published by the UN and its agencies highlight the problems of the developing world: almost 90% of the increase in the world's population between now and the year 2000 will take place in developing countries. The UN wants to see the exchange of information on successful programmes dealing with water supply, sanitation, funds for low income groups, the availability of building materials suitable to the needs of people and the proper management of cities.

8.3 Many countries have launched IYSH programmes and activities in order to make the right decisions in 1987 so as to achieve shelter for all by the year 2000.

8.4 While we acknowledge the grave problems facing the developing countries now and in the future, we are nevertheless concerned that the problems of the developed world are hardly mentioned in UN IYSH literature.

8.5 We believe that the economic difficulties of the developed world will lead to severe housing problems in the future for those who may not even be considered at risk at present.

8.6 We would like to see UN agencies investigate the development of voluntary housing, co-operative housing and the relationship between housing, the environment and social inter-action.

8.7 The Irish Government has designated the Housing Division of the Department of the Environment as being the body responsible for Ireland's part in IYSH.

Chapter 9

A REVIEW OF YOUNG FINE GAEL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

9.1 Young Fine Gael sent a questionnaire (appendix 2) to voluntary organisations working with the homeless, all Health Boards and Local Authorities. The survey was not intended for statistical analysis but it has provided us with a general over-view of the situation and prevailing attitudes.

Forty questionnaires were sent out and 25 replies received. The replies received highlighted the following areas where we feel action is necessary:

9.2 The definitions of homelessness given in answer to our question were both broad and varied, highlighting the need for legislative clarification.

9.3 There was a great deal of inconsistency in the replies received from both the Health Boards and the Local Authorities. Some Local Authorities replied that there was no homelessness in their area but, on consulting the National Directory of Hostels, Night Shelters and Temporary Accommodation, we found that provision WAS made for homeless people by voluntary organisations and/or social services councils in these areas.

9.4 S54 of the 1953 Health Act states that the Health Boards should provide "a limited right to institutional care ie shelter and maintenance for himself and his dependents". In the light of these provisions it is alarming that only 4 Health Boards replied to our questionnaire and, of these, one said they were not directly involved in the provision of services, one supplied us with a list of hostel accommodation and two replied in full.

9.5 Our survey highlights both the lack of official statistical information and a lack of awareness of statutory obligations. It also showed that some statutory bodies go far beyond their legal obligations.

9.6 It is obvious that, in virtually all cases, there is little or no contact between voluntary organisations and statutory authorities but that there is considerable willingness on both parts to improve this contact and consultation.

9.7 With two notable exceptions, there was no formal contact with European equivalents.

Chapter 10

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1- A broad but comprehensive definition of homeless

2- Co-ordinated state policies and legislation to cater for the different needs of homeless people

3- The repeal of section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act

4- Advice centres for homeless people with professional back-up services and financing

5- Formal relations between voluntary organisations and statutory authorities, including a position on the Health Boards for a representative of the former.

6- New legislation which would include -a comprehensive definition of homelessness
-no intentionality clause
-a right of appeal of a housing officer's decision to either a district court or a tribunal
-verbal and written communication of a housing officer's decision
-a social worker's report

7- Governmental review of S54 of the 1953 Health Act

8- The provision of emergency accommodation for those made homeless through some emergency

9- Governmental examination of the present system of housing benefits in the light of the Report of the Commission on Social Welfare

10- National minimum standards in the private rented accommodation sector

11- A duty to be placed on the Local Authority to provide accommodation

12- Government funding to provide information to intending emigrants

13- A well researched, imaginative housing policy for the future

14- Expert examination of the Constitution

15- The prioritisation of the homeless by the EC

16- The development of the European Co-ordination Group of Voluntary Organisations working with the Homeless

17- Formal ties at European level between individuals working in statutory authorities in member States

18- The European Commission to act immediately on the European Parliament motion of June 1987

HOMELESS PERSONS

YOUNG FINE GAEL'S RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS) PROVISIONS) BILL 1985, AS IT RELATES TO HOMELESS PERSONS:

Young Fine Gael is pleased that the Government has finally tackled the problem of Homelessness in the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions) Bill 1985. While welcoming the intentions of the Bill, we have some reservations as to its contents.

Duty to provide accommodation

The placing of the duty to provide accommodation for the Homeless on the Housing Authority ends years of confusion and the disowning of responsibility by the Housing Authorities and Health Boards to varying degrees. This duty must also include the establishment of a co-ordinating structure between the Housing Authority, Health Boards, voluntary organisations, and the Gardai who deal with Homeless persons continually.

Definition of Homelessness

Young Fine Gael wish to see the Government's definition which reads:

> "has no accommodation which in the opinion of the authority he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of"
>
> or
>
> "he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the type referred to (above)" (SECTION 2)

extended to include hostels.

Provision should be made for those in need of immediate accommodation due to emergency situations, emergency situations being the leaving of a place of accommodation due to violence, natural disaster, unsuitability of accommodation and eviction. In such circumstances accommodation should be provided regardless of age, sex, or marital status, and the accommodation should be of good standard.

When accommodation is so provided, it may not be provided for longer than one month without a decision of the Housing Authority being made on whether the party(ies) concerned is Homeless.

Assistance by Housing Authorities of certain bodies

The Bill states:

> "A Housing Authority may, with the consent of the Minister and on such terms and conditions as they think fit, assist another Housing Authority .... or a body approved of by the Minister .. "
> (SECTION 5)

The guidelines for the provision of assistance should be clarified and the term 'a body' defined. Non-Governmental organisations involved in providing accommodation of a temporary or permanent nature for the Homeless should be specifically included in Section 5.

The Housing Authority decision

When making a decision on the provision of accommodation for a Homeless person, the Housing Authority should be bound to employ a social worker to report on the circumstances of the applicant.

It is essential that guidelines within which the Authority would have to judge on intentionality be included in the Bill. In this regard the following reasons could not be used as grounds for considering a person intentionally Homeless:

a) pregnancy
b) being single
c) being able-bodied
d) age
e) the breach of a rental agreement

In the interest of clarity the decision of the Authority should be given verbally and in writing; if a negative decision is made the applicant must be entitled to an oral hearing of application before the Housing Authority. In addition to these proposals provision must be made for the right of appeal to the District Court against an unfavourable decision of the Local Authority.

Expenses of Social Worker

Section 6 of the Bill allows Local Authorities to recoup out of monies provided by the Oireachtas, the salaries and expenses of

social workers employed to work with travellers. Young Fine Gael wish this section to be extended to include provisions for expenses for social workers employed to work for the Homeless, and for their expenses involved in preparing reports for the Authority when assessing whether somebody is Homeless or not.

Young Fine Gael hopes that careful consideration will be given to their recommendations before the Bill is enacted. We realise that such a Bill will not solve the problem and believe a generous attitude is needed on the part of the authorities towards the Homeless as no-one should be expected to sleep rough.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Organisation/Body?.....

   .....

2. Secretary of Organisation/Body?.....

   .....

3. a) Description of your work with the homeless?.....

      .....

      .....

   b) How do you define Homelessness?.....

      .....

      .....

4. What geographical area do you cover? .....

   .....

5. Breakdown of homeless persons with which you deal:

MALE	FEMALE
Number: _____	Number: _____
Age: _____	Age: _____
Background: _____	Background: _____
_____	_____
Marital status:	Marital status:
_____	_____
Health: _____	Health: _____
Family:_____	Family: _____

6. Average period of stay in your hostel/shelter? .....

7. How many people would you estimate to be sleeping rough in your locality? .....

Contd./

8. Do people move regularly between hostels? .....

   Do people alternate between sleeping on the street and in hostels?.....

9. Any other relevant information? .....

   .....

   .....

10. How is your organisation funded? .....

11. What form of contact do you have with:

    a) voluntary organisations .....

    b) statutory bodies .....

12. What relations do you have with similar bodies in Europe?

    .....

13. Do you formulate policy:

    a) for implementation by your organisation or body .....

    b) for national implementation by the government or statutory bodies?
       .....

14. Do you think that relations between voluntary organisations and statutory bodies could be improved. If so, how?

    .....

    .....

15. Do you feel a representative of the voluntary organisations should have a place on the Health Boards?
    .....

16. Please add any other information which you feel might be relevant or useful:

THE UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS:
OUR NUMBER ONE ISSUE

We demand reform of the Taxation and Social Welfare system

Ireland faces:

- a technological revolution which is changing the face of employment
- the deepening division of our society between those who can and those who cannot find work

Where do Taxation and Social Welfare fit in?

- both the taxation and social welfare systems have developed bit by bit, scheme by scheme, with no overall co-ordination. The result is an unholy mess: expensive to administer, difficult to understand, vulnerable to fraud and riddled with anomalies
- having two such totally separate systems also reinforces the psychological distinction between those who live on earned income and those who depend on welfare.

Add to this the Poverty Trap:

- unemployed people cannot train, learn new skills or obtain work experience without having their only source of income - welfare benefits - cut off. For the same reason, they cannot take on low paid or occasional work. With training and work barred to them, such people can become permanently unemployable

The other side of this is that struggling businesses cannot find people willing to take on low paid work because they would be worse off than if they remained unemployed.

Young Fine Gael says bring Tax and Social Welfare together into one system so as to:

- do away with the poverty trap
- end the stigma of means tests and queues
- create a more flexible labour market

We propose a BASIC INCOME SYSTEM

This means:

- paying everyone a Basic Income, whether working or not. This would be about the same amount as Unemployment Assistance and would replace almost all other social welfare payments

- charging tax on all income (in other words, the Basic Income would replace personal tax allowances).

What effect would this have?

- people who enter training courses or take on low paid work would not lose their Basic Income

- employers could afford to take on more employees

- no means tests, forms or categories would be needed

- the system would be extremely simple to administer

- many people (e.g., housewives) would have an independent income for the first time.

This scheme has been thoroughly researched and costed: we know it can work.

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